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ANALYSIS OF [] REPORTS BEARING ON DEVELOPMENTS IN
THE SATELLITES SINCE THE 20TH CPSU PARTY CONGRESS

The first point to be faced clearly is the almost complete absence of evidence that effective control of the satellite countries by the respective communist parties has been weakened appreciably. There are a few indications of increasing restiveness of the anti-communist majority and some rank-and-file communists, but no reports of organized resistance to the regimes (with the possible exception of the student demonstrations in Czechoslovakia on May 20) or suggesting any hope for success if such should arise.

This is not to dismiss from consideration the opposition potential which undoubtedly exists but simply to emphasize that the "new line" has failed to crystallize or activate it in any dramatic, immediate way. The obvious confusion of the hierarchy and the cautious loosening of the lid of governmental control has broken the surface calm of the suppressed peoples with small ripples which might conceivably grow into waves, but this must be counted largely conjectural so far as present information is concerned.

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On the other hand, [] information, though offering no prospect of anti-communist revolution, does paint a composite picture of unparalleled turmoil and uncertainty within the satellite communist parties themselves. Top party leaders, heretofore sacrosanct, are being called to account by nominal subordinates; loss of confidence in the leadership at all levels is widespread and more or less openly expressed. Nationalism is bubbling to the surface here and there. Fierce in-fighting is taking place. Opportunities in the new

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atmosphere to vent personal grudges and resentments are not being overlooked. It is significant, however, that the great ideological introspection has, so far, been kept within the ground rules: not even the most excited advocate of change has admitted the possibility of any fundamental fallacy in Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

What we are witnessing, in fact, is an unprecedented test of the peculiar Soviet institution of self-criticism, which has its origins in the early development of the Communist Party and is one of the key elements in its ideological underpinnings. Originally conceived by Marx as a substitute for true opposition parties, which Marxism in power cannot permit, it was described by Stalin as "an inseparable and constantly operating weapon in the arsenal of Bolshevism, indissolubly connected with the very nature of Bolshevism, with its revolutionary spirit."

But Bolshevik criticism must not be allowed to question--in the manner of the freely enquiring Western mind--the system of logic dictated by dialectical materialism. The argument must be confined to means, because the Marxist-Leninist Truth was So from the Beginning and the Mistake would never have occurred if only the Word had been interpreted and carried out correctly. From this premise, it is permissible, though hazardous, to declare that Stalin misinterpreted or misapplied the Word, without admitting anything wrong with the system which made Stalin possible.

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Self-criticism must constantly skirt the edge of objective enquiry without stepping over the dread line; it must examine and treat symptoms in the body politic but never proceed to the discovery that the brain is upside down and the sensory perceptions distorted. While the CPSU has handled this problem with amazing skill for 30 years, it does not necessarily follow that the satellite parties will be able to do so in the present circumstances.

The denigration of Stalin is the most violent jolt which the instrument of self-criticism has ever had to absorb, and reports indicate that the reverberating shocks are proving harder to control in the satellite parties than in the CPSU itself. The principal reasons appear to be: (1) nationalism, taking the form both of resentment against domination and faulty leadership by the Soviet Union, and traditional clashes of interest with other satellite states, and (2) closer affinity, particularly in Poland and Czechoslovakia, with Western cultural heritage and non-Marxian philosophical theory.

The "liberalization" line ordained by Moscow along with the denigration of Stalin was, of course, not meant to permit destructive or fundamental criticism. Nevertheless, many party functionaries on all levels in the satellite countries, cast adrift in the heady atmosphere of "liberalization," have evidently been wandering in and out of varying interpretations of the precise limits, without wittingly questioning fundamentals

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The most tangible evidence of opposition to the regime consciously transcending allowable limits of criticism was afforded by the student

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demonstrations in Czechoslovakia on May 20. Yet even this highly illuminating incident was pushed off with official approval and encouragement as a token of "liberalization," the criticism evidently intended to be guided by party youth groups. The way it got out of hand is an object lesson in (1) how opportunity for quick and lethal criticism can be seized, (2) how the authorities react with a deadpan explanation of why some of the criticism was a Mistake, and (3) how effective police control of the country is apparently not weakened by such a demonstration, and how the leading dissidents can be quietly arrested. The demands of the students clearly show the force in Czechoslovak intellectual life of national pride and Western non-Marxian cultural heritage. Judging from information so far received, however, the consequences of the demonstration tend to show that stark, undisguised slashes at the roots of Moscow control are not yet safe or fruitful.

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